

South African Army

1890 – Present



Insignia

Medals & Ribbons

Badges

Rank Insignia

Uniforms



## Disclaimer

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## Army

The South African Defence Force (SADF) comprised the South African armed forces from 1957 until 1994. Shortly before the state reconstituted itself as a republic in 1961, the former Union Defence Force was officially succeeded by the SADF, which was established by the Defence Act (No. 44) of 1957. The SADF, in turn, was superseded by the South African National Defence Force in 1994.



The SADF was organised to perform a dual mission: to counter possible insurgency in all forms, and to maintain a conventional military arm which could defend the republic's borders, making retaliatory strikes as necessary. As the military expanded during the 1970s, the SADF general staff was organised into six sections — finance, intelligence, logistics, operations, personnel, and planning; uniquely, the South African Medical Service (SAMS) was made co-equal with the South African Army, the South African Navy and the South African Air Force.

The military was mostly composed of white South Africans, who alone were subject to conscription. However, Asians and Coloured citizens with mixed ancestry were eligible to serve as volunteers, several even attaining commissioned rank. Units such as the 32 Battalion incorporated many black volunteers. Conscription was opposed by organisations such as the End Conscription Campaign, but overall, white morale remained high — as indicated by the few recruits tried for serious disciplinary offences.

During apartheid, armed SADF troops were used in quelling opposition to minority rule, often directly supporting the South African Police. South African military units were involved in the long-running Mozambican and Angolan civil wars, frequently supporting Pretoria's allies, the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). SADF personnel were also deployed during the related South African Border War.





















The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) comprises the armed forces of South Africa. The commander of the SANDF is appointed by the President of South Africa from one of the armed services. They are in turn accountable to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans of the Defence Department.

The military as it exists today was created in 1994, following South Africa's first post-apartheid national elections and the adoption of a new constitution. It replaced the South African Defence Force.



















## Insignia

				
1 Regiment Northern Transvaal	1 Construction Regiment	1 Medical Group Battalion	1 Military Film and Printing Unit	1 Parachute Battalion
				
1 Reconnaissance Regiment	1 South African Infantry Battalion	1 Special Forces Regiment	1 Special Training Unit	2 Cape Corps Infantry Battalion
				
2 Field Engineers Regiment	2 Locating Regiment Artillery	2 Special Service Battalion	3 Electronic Workshop Signals Unit	3 Medical Group Battalion
				
3 South African Infantry Battalion	4 Field Regiment	4 Maintenance Unit	4 South African Infantry Battalion	4 Survey and Map Regiment


				
5 Military Works Unit	5 Reconnaissance Regiment	5 Special Forces Regiment	5 Signals Unit	6 Maintenance Unit
				
6 Medical Group Battalion	6 Military Works Unit	7 Light Anti Aircraft Regiment	7 South African Division	7 SA Division Motorisation Unit
				
7 South African Division	7 Special Forces Medical Battalion	8 South African Division	9 South African Division	9 South African Infantry Battalion
				
10 South African Artillery Brigade	10 South African Infantry Battalion	12 Field Squadron	12 General Support Base	14 Field Artillery Regiment




























				
15 Field Engineer Regiment	19 Rocket Regiment	21 South African Infantry Battalion	30 Field Workshop	31 Field Workshop
				
32 South African Infantry Battalion	35 Engineer Support Unit	43 Mechanised Brigade	44 Parachute Brigade HQ	51 Battalion Group
				
55 South African Infantry Battalion	61 Mechanised Infantry Battalion	71 Motorised Brigade	73 Motorised Brigade	81 Armoured Brigade
				
83 Technical Stores	84 Technical Stores	101 Air Supply	101 Base Workshop	116 South African Infantry Battalion





















				
117 South African Infantry Battalion	121 Zulu Battalion	151 South African Infantry Battalion	Army Catering Corps	Army Gymnasium
				
SANDF Infantry Formation badge	SANDF Army Emblem	SANDF Emblem	SANDF Infantry	SANDF 5 SAI
				
SANDF 6 SAI	2 Parachute Battalion	SANDF 2 SAI	SANDF 7 SAI	SADF 8 SAI
				
11 Commando	SANDF 14 SAI	SANDF 15 SAI	SANDF 21 SAI	Regiment Bloemspruit
				
Alberton Commando	Alexander Bay Commando	Barberton Commando	Commando	Bothaville Commando



				
Brits Commando	Broederstroom Commando	Cachet Commando	Caledon River Commando	Calvinia Commando
				
Cape Flats Commando	De Mist Commando	Delmas Commando	Drakensberg Commando	East Park Commando
				
Edenvale Commando	Ermelo Commando	Gatsrand Commando	Goldfields Commando	Gordonia Commando
				
Grootfontein Commando	Frankfort Commando	Hantam Commando	Harrismith Commando	Hercules Commando
				
Insele Commando	Irene Commando	Jacobsdal Commando	Johannesburg East Commando	Karoo Commando

				
Koeberg Commando	Koppies Commando	Kugersdorp Commando	Ladybrand Commando	Lindley Commando
				
Lions Head Commando	Lydenburg Commando	Mafikeng Commando	Magdol Commando	Meyerton Commando
				
Midland Commando	Modderfontein Commando	Mossel Bay Commando	Murraydeen Commando	Nigel Commando
				
Northam Commando	Oudtshoorn Commando	Outeniqua Commando	Palaborwa Commando	Parys Commando
				
Pietersburg Commando	Pongola Commando	Pretoria East Commando	Recife Commando	Reitz Commando



				
Rouxville Commando	Sandriver Commando	Schanskop Commando	Secunda Commando	South Coast Commando
				
Soutpansberg Commando	Springbok Commando	Standerton Commando	Stellenbosch Commando	Swartland Commando
				
Swellendam Commando	Thabazimbi Commando	Theunissen Commando	Tygerburg Commando	Vereeniging Commando
				
Virginia Commando	Volksrust Commando	Vrede Commando	Worester Commando	Zeerust Commando

## Qualification Badges

		
SADF Sniper	SADF Marksman 1st Class (Gold)	SADF Marksman 2nd Class (Silver)
		
SADF Marksman 3rd Class (Bronze)	SADF Marksman Commando	SADF Marksman Advanced Pistol
		
SADF Marksman Pistol	61 Mech Battalion Ops Participation Bar	Artillery Proficiency Master Gunner
		
Air Supply parachute Wing Instructor	Air Supply parachute Wing	Hunter Group Parachute Wings
		
Advanced & Freefall Parachute Wings	Basic Parachute Wings	Freefall Instructor Paratrooper Wings
		
Parachute Instructor Wings	Reconnaissance Commando Diver badge	Reconnaissance Commando Attack Diver badge

		
Buffel Driver Proficiency Award.	Tracker Instructor	44 Parachute Brigade Super Trooper Award
		
44 Parachute Brigade Progressive Jumps Award	School Cadet Badge	Cap badge of 1st SA Infantry Brigade 1900-1945
		
SA Tank Corps	SA Artillery Badge	SA Artillery Badge
		
SA Artillery Badge	Cadet Corpse	Cape Mounted Rifles Cap Badge
		
Natal Mounted Rifles Cap Badge	SA Army Badge	SA Army HQ Unit



## Colour Bars

		
Infantry 1st Pattern	Infantry 2nd Pattern	Infantry 3rd Pattern
		
Mechanised Infantry 1st Pattern	Mechanised Infantry 2nd Pattern	5 Recce Regt.
		
Commandos	Army Intelligence 1st Pattern	Army Intelligence 2nd Pattern
		
Artillery	Air Defence	Armour
		
Engineers	Ordinance Services	Catering
		
Ammunition	Personnel	Finance
		
Technical Services	Chaplains	Professional Officers
		
Military Police 1st Pattern	Military Police 2nd Pattern	Military Intelligence (Strategic)
		
Light Horse Regiment	Army Band	Signals
		
Army Troops	Engineers Formation	Signals Formation
		
Log Command	7 Division	73 Brigade

		
8 Division	Special Forces Brigade	44 Parachute Brigade
		
Walvis Bay Military Area	Western Province Command	Orange Free State Command
		
Northern Transvaal Command	North West Command	Witwatersrand Command
		
Far North Command	Eastern Cape Command	Eastern Transvaal Command
		
South West Africa Command	Natal Command	Gauteng Command

## Ribbons & Medals

### British colonial and Boer military forces

*BEFORE the Union of South Africa was established in 1910, there were separate military organisations in the British colonies (Natal, Cape Colony, and Transvaal) and the Boer republics (Orange Free State and the South African Republic). These forces had a few decorations and medals.*

#### British colonial forces



Distinguished  
Conduct Medal



Cape of Good Hope  
GSM



Natal Rebellion Medal



Medal for Long Service & Good Conduct  
- Cape



- Natal



Medal for Meritorious Service  
- Cape



- Natal



Volunteer Officers'  
Decoration



Volunteer Long  
Service Medal



CAF Officers'  
Decoration



CAF Long Service  
Medal

The Cape Colonial Forces (CCF) comprised a small Permanent Force and a part-time Volunteer Force. Natal had the para-military Natal Police (NP), and a Volunteer Force, which was reorganised as the Natal Militia (NM) in 1904. The NP and NM amalgamated to form the Natal Colonial Forces (NCF) in 1908. The Transvaal had the Transvaal Volunteers (TV), formed in 1902. All three organisations were absorbed into the new Union Defence Forces (UDF) in July 1913.

In May 1894, Queen Victoria authorised colonial governments throughout the British Empire to adopt various military medals, and to award them to their local forces. Natal and the Cape introduced this system in August and September 1894 respectively, and the Transvaal followed in December 1902. These colonial medals were used until June 1913.

**Medal for Distinguished Conduct in the Field** (1896-1913) — An adopted British decoration, for distinctly gallant and distinguished service in the field by "other ranks". Adopted by the Cape in 1896, by Natal in 1897, and by the Transvaal in 1902. Only 8 awards were made, all by Natal.

*Insignia:* Same design as the equivalent British award: a circular silver medal displaying a trophy of arms (until 1901) or the reigning monarch's head (obverse) and the words 'For Distinguished Conduct in the Field' with the name of the colony (reverse).

**Cape of Good Hope General Service Medal** (1900) — Issued, on application, to surviving veterans of the Transkei campaign and the Basutoland Gun War (both September 1880 to April 1881), and the Bechuanaland campaign (December 1896 to July 1897). Clasps inscribed 'Transkei', 'Basutoland', and 'Bechuanaland' were issued to identify the campaigns. A total of 5252 medals was issued.

*Insignia:* A circular silver medal displaying the head of Queen Victoria (obverse) and the Cape Colony coat of arms (reverse).

**Natal Native Rebellion Medal** (1907) — For service (minimum 20 days) in operations to suppress the Bhambatha uprising in Natal between 11 February and 3 August 1906. A clasp was added if the recipient had served for 50 days or longer, which most of them had. Although primarily intended for the Natal forces, the medal was also issued to Cape and Transvaal units which supported them. A total of 9622 medals was issued.

*Insignia:* A silver circular medal depicting King Edward VII (obverse), and Natalia and Britannia (reverse).

**Medal for Long Service and Good Conduct** (1896-1913) — An adopted British medal, introduced in the Cape in 1896 and in Natal in 1897. Awarded for 18 years irreproachable service in the ranks of the Permanent Force (Cape) or the Natal Police. If a recipient later received the Medal for Meritorious Service, he had to stop wearing the long service medal.

*Insignia:* A circular silver medal displaying a trophy of arms (until 1901) or the effigy of the reigning monarch (obverse) and "For Long Service and Good Conduct" and the name of the colony (reverse).

**Medal for Meritorious Service** (1896-1913) — Another adopted British medal, introduced together with the long service medal. Awarded to PF and NP warrant officers and senior non-commissioned officers, usually on retirement, after long and valuable service.



*Insignia:* Similar design to the long service medal, but with a "For Meritorious Service" and the colony's name on the reverse.

**Volunteer Officers' Decoration (VD)** (1894-1901) — Instituted for the British forces in 1892 and adopted by both Natal and the Cape in 1894. Awarded to volunteer officers after 20 years efficient commissioned service.

*Insignia:* An oval silver wreath of oak leaves framing a gilt royal cipher.

**Volunteer Long Service Medal** (1895-1901) — Instituted for the British forces in 1894 and adopted by Natal and the Cape in 1895. Awarded to all ranks of the volunteers after 20 years efficient service. An officer who later received the VD (either version) had to stop wearing the medal.

*Insignia:* A circular silver medal displaying the effigy of the reigning monarch (obverse) and 'For Long Service in the Volunteer Force' (reverse).

**Colonial Auxiliary Forces Officers' Decoration (VD)** (1900-1913) — Instituted in 1899 to replace the Volunteer Officers' Decoration in the colonies, and adopted by Natal in 1900, the Cape in 1901, and the Transvaal in 1906. Awarded to volunteer or militia officers after 20 years efficient commissioned service.

*Insignia:* A crowned oval silver frame enclosing a gilt royal cipher.

**Colonial Auxiliary Forces Long Service Medal** (1900-1913) — Instituted, and adopted, at the same time as the CAF Officers' Decoration. Awarded to all ranks in the volunteer or militia forces, after 20 years efficient service. An officer who later received the VD had to stop wearing the medal.

*Insignia:* A circular silver medal displaying the effigy of the reigning monarch (obverse) and 'For Long Service in the Colonial Auxiliary Forces' (reverse).

#### Boer republican forces



The Orange Free State and the South African Republic had their own military forces until they were defeated in the Anglo-Boer War in 1902. Neither republic had an official honours system. This became a problem after the Union Defence Forces were formed in 1912, because the ex-colonial forces personnel wore medals for the Anglo-Boer War, while their ex-Boer colleagues had none. The problem was solved in December 1920, by instituting a series of three awards for the Boer veterans.

The medals, which were designed by Ernest(?) Stokoe, were innovative (and unique in South Africa) in each having a ZAR side and an OVS side, with reversible ribbons, so that recipients could wear them whichever way round was appropriate for them.

**Dekoratie voor Trouwe Dienst (DTD) (1920)** — The 'Decoration for Devoted Service', awarded to former officers for distinguished and especially meritorious service during the war (equivalent to the British *Distinguished Service Order*). Altogether, 645 decorations were granted, some of them posthumously.

*Insignia:* A silver circular medal, displaying the ZAR arms on a cross on one side and the OVS arms on a cross on the other, and the words 'Voor Trouwe Dienst 1899-1902' on both sides.

**Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek en Oranje Vrystaat Oorlogsmedalje (1920)** — The 'SA Republic and Orange Free State War Medal', often referred to as the 'Anglo-Boere Oorlog Medal', was issued to veterans who had served in the field between 11 October 1899 and 31 May 1902, provided they were still serving on the latter date. Around 13 750 medals were issued, some as late as the 1980s.

*Insignia:* A silver circular medal depicting the ZAR arms in an ornamental frame on one side, and the OVS arms on the other, and 'Anglo-Boere Oorlog 1899-1902' on both.

**Lint voor Verwonding (1920)** — This 'Wounds Ribbon', granted to those who had been wounded in action, was unique both in its purpose and in consisting only of a ribbon.

#### Union Defence Forces and RN Volunteer Reserve

*TWO defence organisations were established after Union in 1910 : the Union Defence Forces (later 'South African Defence Force') and the South African Division of the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve. They used British military awards, together with a few medals which were exclusive to South Africa.*

#### Union Defence Forces : 1913-39



Distinguished  
Conduct Medal



Victory Medal



Medal for LS & GC



Medal for Meritorious  
Service : Ribbon 1



Medal for Meritorious Service  
Ribbon 2



Ribbon 3



CAF Officers'  
Decoration



CAF Long Service  
Medal

The Union Defence Forces (UDF) were formed in July 1912. They originally consisted of an army of Permanent Force and part-time Citizen Force units. Air and naval branches were added to the PF in 1920 and 1922 respectively.

The UDF used four successive series of decorations and medals during its 82-year existence: 1913 to 1939; 1939 to 1952; 1952 to 1975; and 1975 to 1994. The first series, established in June 1913, continued the colonial system, which enabled the South African government to award certain British medals directly. It consisted of eight decorations and medals. During

World War I, South Africans also received orders and decorations from the British government.

**Medal for Distinguished Conduct in the Field** (1914-40) — An adopted British decoration, intended as an award for distinctly gallant and distinguished service in the field by "other ranks". Never awarded, but more than 300 UDF members received the original British decoration during the two world wars.

*Insignia:* Same design as the equivalent British award: a circular silver medal displaying the reigning king's head (obverse) and the words 'For Distinguished Conduct in the Field' (reverse).

**Victory Medal** (1921) — The South African variant, approved in 1921, of the British version of the medal established by the victorious Allies at the Versailles peace conference. Awarded, in addition to the British World War I service stars and medals, to service personnel who had served in any theatre of war between 4 August 1914 and 25 November 1918.

The UDF served in German South West Africa (1914-15), and the volunteer SA Overseas Expeditionary Force served in Egypt (1916), France and Belgium (1916-18), German East Africa (1916-18), and Palestine (1917-18).

*Insignia:* A circular gold-coloured bronze medal depicting the figure of Victory (obverse) and the words 'The Great War for Civilisation - De Grote Oorlog voor de Beschaving - 1914-1919' (reverse).

**Medal for Long Service and Good Conduct** (1914-39) — An adopted British medal, awarded for 18 years exemplary service in the ranks of the Permanent Force.

*Insignia:* A circular silver medal displaying the reigning king's head (obverse) and the words 'Permanent Forces of the Empire Beyond the Seas - For Long Service and Good Conduct' (reverse). Until 1920, recipients were paid cash gratuities.

**Medal for Meritorious Service** (1914-40) — An adopted British medal, awarded for long (minimum 21 years), valuable, and meritorious service in the ranks of the PF. Awarded to selected warrant officers and senior non-commissioned officers on retirement or discharge. Until 1920, recipients were paid cash gratuities. Only 46 medals were awarded.

*Insignia:* Same design as the equivalent British Army award, i.e. a circular silver medal displaying the reigning king's head (obverse) and the words 'For Meritorious Service' (reverse). It appears that three ribbons were used over the years : the first two were the British ribbons, while the third, apparently introduced in the 1920s, was exclusive to South Africa.

**Colonial Auxiliary Forces Officers' Decoration (VD)** (1913-39) — An adopted British medal, awarded for 20 years efficient service as an officer in the Citizen Force.

*Insignia:* A gilt royal cipher in a crowned oval frame inscribed "Colonial Auxiliary Forces" (obverse).



**Colonial Auxiliary Forces Long Service Medal (1913-39)** — An adopted British medal, awarded to all ranks of the CF after 20 years efficient service. An officer who later received the VD had to stop wearing this medal.

*Insignia:* A circular silver medal displaying the reigning king's head (obverse) and the words 'For Long Service in the Colonial Auxiliary Forces' (reverse).

#### South African Division of the RN Volunteer Reserve



RNVR Officers'  
Decoration



RNVR LS & GC Medal

The South African Division of the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve was established in July 1913. Its members were liable for service in the Royal Navy in wartime. They were transferred to the Union Defence Forces in August 1942, but the RNVR(SA) continued to exist, on paper, until June 1949.

The government was authorised to award the RNVR's long service decoration and medal to members of the South African Division. During World Wars I and II, RNVR(SA) members who served with the Royal Navy qualified for British decorations and medals.

**RNVR Volunteer Officers' Decoration (VD) (1915-49)** — An adopted British medal, awarded for 20 years efficient service as an officer in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve.

*Insignia:* A gilt crowned royal cipher in an oval silver frame of cable. Until 1919, the ribbon was plain green.

**RNVR Medal for Long Service and Good Conduct (1915-49)** — An adopted British medal, awarded to all ranks of the RNVR after 12 years efficient service. An officer who later received the VD had to stop wearing this medal.

*Insignia:* A circular silver medal displaying the reigning king's head (obverse), and a battleship at sea and the words 'Diuturne Fidelis' (reverse). Until 1919, the ribbon was plain green.

#### Union Defence Forces : 1939-52



Africa Service Medal



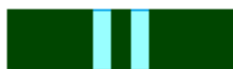
Medal for LS & GC



Efficiency Decoration



Efficiency Medal



Air Efficiency Award

During the period 1939-52, the UDF comprised a Permanent Force (land, air and naval forces), and a Citizen Force (land, air and, from 1942, naval forces). In 1951, the UDF were reorganised into the SA

Army, SA Air Force, SA Navy, and the short-lived SA Corps of Marines, each containing PF and CF units.

The second series of UDF decorations and medals, established in December 1939, consisted of South African variants of British long service medals, which the rest of the Commonwealth had adopted a few years earlier, and two original South African awards. During World War II, UDF personnel received orders and decorations from the British government.

**Africa Service Medal** (1943) — An original South African medal, awarded to UDF members who volunteered for service outside South Africa during World War II, i.e. between 6 September 1939 and 2 September 1945. The medal originally covered only service in Africa, but from 1944 it applied to service anywhere in the world. The minimum qualifying service was 30 days full-time or 18 hours part-time.

UDF land forces served in East Africa (1940-41), North Africa (1941-43), Madagascar (1942), and Italy (1944-45). Air forces served in those campaigns, as well as in West Africa (1943-45), Sicily (1943), and South-East Europe (1943-45), and provided air support to the Warsaw uprising (1944). Naval forces and seconded personnel served in the Mediterranean (1941-45), Greece (1941), the Arctic convoys (1941-45), the Java Sea (1942), Sicily (1943), the Indian Ocean (1943-45), the D-Day invasion (1944), and the Pacific (1945).

*Insignia:* A circular silver medal depicting a map of Africa (obverse) and a springbok prancing through the veld (reverse). The medal was designed by E. Naylor, based on an idea by prime minister Gen Jan Smuts.

**Medal for Long Service and Good Conduct (Military)** (1939-52) — A South African variant of a British medal, awarded for 18 years exemplary service in the ranks of the Permanent Force. From 1945, a clasp could be added after 36 years service.

*Insignia:* A circular silver medal displaying King George VI's head (obverse) and the words 'For Long Service and Good Conduct - Vir Langdurige Diens en Goeie Gedrag' (reverse), with 'Staande Mag - Permanent Force' on the suspender.

**Efficiency Decoration (ED)** (1939-52) — A South African variant of a British medal, awarded for 20 years efficient service as an officer in the Citizen Force. A clasp could be added after 30 years service. 886 EDs were awarded.

*Insignia:* A gilt crowned royal cipher framed in an oval silver wreath of oak leaves, with the name of the country on a brooch bar at the top of the ribbon.

**Efficiency Medal** (1939-52) — A South African variant of a British medal, awarded for 12 years service in the ranks of the CF. Clasps could be added after additional 6-year periods.

*Insignia:* An oval silver medal displaying the head of King George VI (obverse) and the words 'Medalje vir Bekwaamheid - Efficiency Medal' (reverse), with the name of the country on the suspender.

**Air Efficiency Award** (1950-52) — A South African variant of a British medal, intended as an award for 10 years CF service in the SA Air Force. It was never awarded, probably because SAAF personnel were already eligible for the ED and Efficiency Medal.

*Insignia:* An oval silver medal depicting the head of King George VI (obverse) and the words 'Air Efficiency Award - Toekenning vir Bekwaamheid (Lugmag)' (reverse), with the name of the country on the suspender.

**King's Commendation** (1941) — An original South African award, for valuable services during World War II.

*Insignia:* A silver or bronze protea flower emblem, worn on the ribbon of the Africa Service Medal.

### Boer war veterans

In 1920, the South African government instituted a separate set of awards, for Boer veterans of the 1899–1902 Anglo-Boer War — neither of the Boer republics for which they had fought had had its own honours system. The awards were:














- **Decoration**
  - Dekoratie voor Trouwe Dienst (Decoration for Devoted Service) (DTD)
- **Campaign medals**
  - South African Republic & Orange Free State War Medal
  - Wounds Ribbon.



## 1952–1975












South Africa introduced its own honours system in 1952. Its largest component was a series of military decorations and medals, which not only replaced the existing long service medals, but provided substitutes for the decorations which the British government had awarded in wartime:









Decoration Name	Post Nominals	Period current	Number awarded	Awarded for	Ribbon
Castle of Good Hope Decoration	CGH	1952–2003	Never awarded	Most conspicuous bravery	
Louw Wepener Decoration	LWD	1952–1975	7	Most conspicuous courage or greatest heroism	
Star of South Africa	SSA	1952–1975	20	Exceptionally meritorious service	
Van Riebeeck Decoration	DVR	1952–1975	2	Distinguished service in the field (officers)	
Honoris Crux (1952)	HC	1952–1975	5	Gallantry in action against the enemy	
Van Riebeeck Medal	VRM	1952–1975	5	Distinguished service in the field (other ranks)	
Louw Wepener Medal	LWM	1967–1975	8	Courageous or heroic deeds in saving lives	
Southern Cross Medal (1952)	SM	1952–75	587	Outstanding devotion to duty	
Pro Merito Medal (1967)	PMM	1967–75	374	Outstanding devotion to duty (other ranks)	
Danie Theron Medal		1970–2003		Diligent service in the Commandos	
Jack Hindon Medal		1970–1975	18	Diligent service in the Commandos (other ranks)	
<b>Campaign medals</b>					

Korea Medal		1953		Service in the Korean War	
<b>Commemorative Medals</b>					
Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Medal		1953		To commemorate the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II	
<b>Long Service Medals</b>					
Union Medal		1952–1961		18 years service in the Permanent Force	
Permanent Force Good Service Medal		1961–1975		18 years service in the Permanent Force	
John Chard Decoration	JCD	1952–2003		20 years service in the Citizen Force	
De Wet Decoration	DWD	1952–2003		20 years service in the Commandos	
John Chard Medal		1952–2003		12 years service in the Citizen Force	
Cadet Corps Medal		1966–1967		20 years service in school cadets	
<b>Shooting Medals</b>					
Queen's Medal for Champion Shots		1953–1961		Winning the annual SADF shooting championships	
Commandant General's Medal		1965–1975		Winning the annual SADF shooting championships	
<b>Emblems</b>					
Commendation by the Chief of the SADF		1968–1974			

## 1975–2003

A new system was introduced in 1975. It retained seven of the existing decorations and medals. Innovations included a hierarchy of merit awards, cumulative long service medals, and colour-coded ribbons. As the South African Defence Force was engaged in military operations in South West Africa and Angola throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the number of awards granted each year increased significantly. Additional decorations were instituted between 1987 and 1991.

Decoration Name	Post Nominals	Period current	Number awarded	Awarded for	Ribbon
Castle of Good Hope Decoration	CGH	1952–2003	Never awarded	Most conspicuous bravery	
Honoris Crux Diamond	HCD	1975–93	Never awarded	Death-defying heroic deeds of outstanding valour	
Honoris Crux Gold	HCG	1975–93	6	Outstanding bravery in extreme danger	
Star of South Africa, Gold	SSA	1975–2003		Meritorious military service.	
Star of South Africa, Silver	SSAS	1975–2003		Meritorious military service.	
Honoris Crux Silver	HCS	1975–2003	27	Exceptional bravery in great danger	
Honoris Crux (1975)	HC	1975–2003	201	Bravery while in danger	
Pro Virtute Decoration	PVD	1987–2003		Distinguished conduct and exceptional combat leadership (officers)	
Southern Cross Decoration	SD	1975–2003		Outstanding service of the highest order, and utmost devotion to duty (Officers)	
Pro Merito Decoration	PMD	1975–2003		Outstanding service of the highest order, and utmost devotion to duty (other ranks)	
Pro Virtute Medal	PVM	1987–2003	Never awarded	Distinguished conduct and exceptional combat leadership (other ranks)	


Ad Astra Decoration	AAD	1987–2003		Excellent flying skill or ingenuity by SA Air Force aircrew in emergencies or unusual situations <sup>[1]</sup>	
Army Cross	CM	1991–2003		Exceptional courage, leadership, skill or ingenuity in dangerous or critical situations (army personnel)	
Air Force Cross	CA	1991–2003		Exceptional courage, leadership, skill or ingenuity in dangerous or critical situations (air force personnel)	
Navy Cross	CN	1991–2003		Exceptional courage, leadership, skill or ingenuity in dangerous or critical situations (naval personnel)	
Medical Service Cross	CC	1991–2003		Exceptional courage, leadership, skill or ingenuity in dangerous or critical situations (military health service personnel)	
Southern Cross Medal (1975)	SM	1975–2003		Exceptionally meritorious service and particular devotion to duty (officers)	
Pro Merito Medal (1975)	PMM	1975–2003		Exceptionally meritorious service and particular devotion to duty (other ranks)	
Danie Theron Medal	DTM	1970–2003		Exceptionally diligent and outstanding service in the Commandos	
Military Merit Medal	MMM	1974–2003		Service of a high order	










## Campaign medals





Pro Patria Medal		1974– 1989		Operational service in combating terrorism or in defence of South Africa	
Southern Africa Medal		1989		Service in military operations outside South Africa and South West Africa between 1976 and 1989	
General Service Medal		1989		Operational service inside South Africa from 1983	

## Commemorative Medals

Unitas Medal	1994	To commemorate the amalgamation of the SADF, APLA, MK and the homeland defence forces to form the SA National Defence Force	
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## Long Service Medals





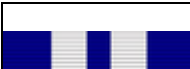

Medal for Distinguished Conduct and Loyal Service		1987–2003		40 years service in the Defence Force	
Good Service Medal, Gold		1975–2003		30 years service in the Permanent Force	
Good Service Medal, Silver		1975–2003		20 years service in the Permanent Force	
John Chard Decoration	JCD	1952–2003		20 years service in the Citizen Force	
De Wet Decoration	DWD	1952–2003		20 years service in the Commandos	
John Chard Medal		1952–2003		12 (from 1986, 10) years service in the Citizen Force	
Good Service Medal, Bronze		1975–2003		10 years service in the Permanent Force	






De Wet Medal		1987–2003		10 years service in the Commandos	
<b>Shooting Medals</b>					
SADF Champion Shot Medal		1975–2003		Champion shots of the annual SADF Bisley in the categories of fullbore, smallbore, pistol and service shooting	
Cadet Corps Champion Shot Medal		1987–2003			
<b>Emblems</b>					
Mentioned in Dispatches		1967–2003			

### Armed opposition organisations





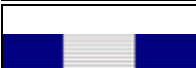


In 1996, two separate sets of decorations were instituted for veterans who had served in the Azanian People's Liberation Army and Umkhonto we Sizwe during the armed campaign against the former government.

### Azanian People's Liberation Army

Decoration Name	Post Nominals	Period current	Number awarded	Awarded for	Ribbon
Gold Star for Bravery	GSB	1996–2003		Exceptional bravery in great danger	
Bravery Star in Silver	BSS	1996–2003		Bravery	
Star for Conspicuous Leadership	SCL	1996–2003		Distinguished conduct and exceptional combat leadership	
Gold Decoration for Merit	GDM	1996–2003		Outstanding service and utmost devotion to duty	
Silver Medal for Merit	SMM	1996–2003		Exceptionally meritorious service and particular devotion to duty	
Bronze Medal for Merit	BMM	1996–2003		Service of a high order	

Campaign medals					
Operational Medal for Southern Africa		1996–2003		Operational service outside South Africa	
South Africa Service Medal		1996–2003		Operational service inside South Africa	
Long Service medals					
Gold Service Medal		1996–2003		30 years service in APLA	
Silver Service Medal		1996–2003		20 years service in APLA	
Bronze Service Medal		1996–2003		10 years service in APLA	

#### Umkhonto we Sizwe

Decoration Name	Post Nominals	Period current	Number awarded	Awarded for	Ribbon
Star for Bravery in Gold	SBG	1996–2003		Exceptional bravery in great danger	
Star for Bravery in Silver	SBS	1996–2003		Bravery	
Conspicuous Leadership Star	CLS	1996–2003		Distinguished conduct and exceptional combat leadership	
Decoration for Merit in Gold	GDMG	1996–2003		Outstanding service and utmost devotion to duty	
Merit Medal in Silver	MMS	1996–2003		Exceptionally meritorious service and particular devotion to duty	
Merit Medal in Bronze	MMB	1996–2003		Service of a high order	
Campaign medals					
Operational Medal for Southern Africa		1996–2003		Operational service outside South Africa	




South Africa Service Medal		1996–2003		Operational service inside South Africa	
<b>Long Service medals</b>					
Service Medal in Gold		1996–2003		30 years service in Umkhonto we Sizwe	
Service Medal in Silver		1996–2003		20 years service in Umkhonto we Sizwe	
Service Medal in Bronze		1996 – 2003		10 years service in Umkhonto we Sizwe	

### South African National Defence Force




The South African National Defence Force, which was formed in 1994 by amalgamating the SADF, the liberation armies, and the military forces of the former homelands, used the SADF decorations and medals until 2003, when a new series of decorations was instituted:



### Bravery

-  Nkwe ya Gauta (NG) (Golden Leopard)
-  Nkwe ya Selefera (NS) (Silver Leopard)
-  Nkwe ya Boronse (NB) (Bronze Leopard)

### Superior Service

-  iPhrothiya yeGolide (PG) (Golden Protea)
-  iPhrothiya yeSiliva (PS) (Silver Protea)
-  iPhrothiya yeBhronzi (PB) (Bronze Protea)





### Campaign medal

-  Tshumelo Ikatelaho (General Service Medal)


### Commemoration Medal

-  Closure Commemoration Medal

#### Long service medal

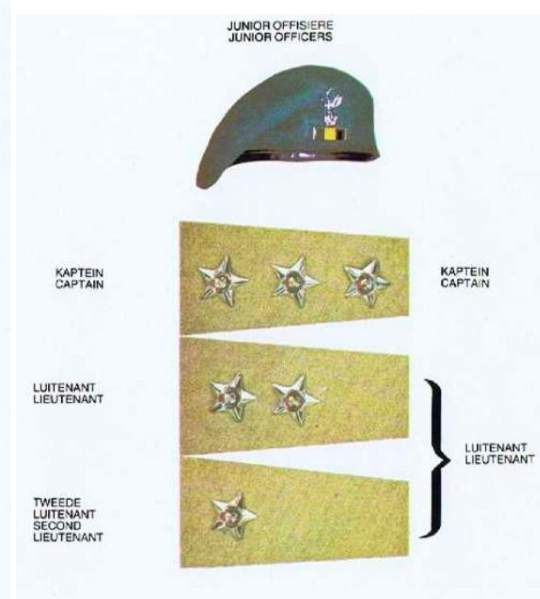
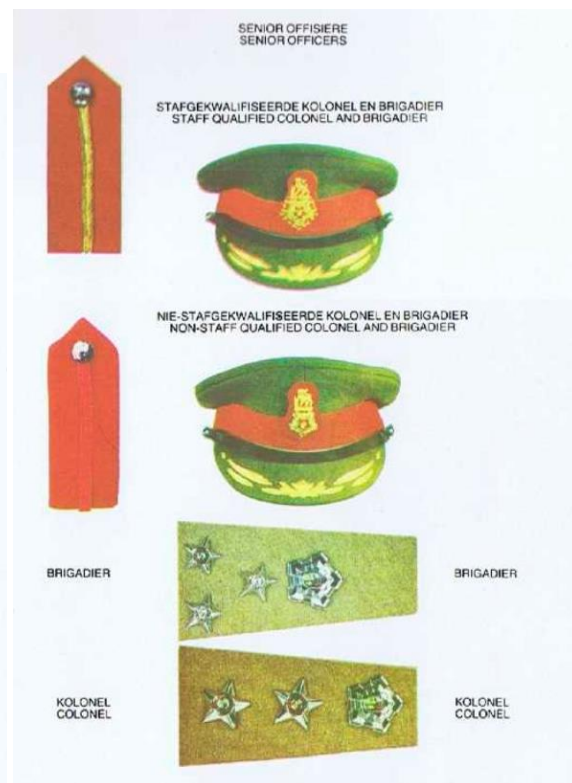
-  Medalje vir Troue Diens (Medal for Loyal Service)
-  Medalje vir Troue Diens (Medal for Loyal Service with 20 Year Clasp)
-  Medalje vir Troue Diens (Medal for Loyal Service with 30 Year Clasp)
-  Medalje vir Troue Diens (Medal for Loyal Service with 40 Year Clasp)

#### Emblems

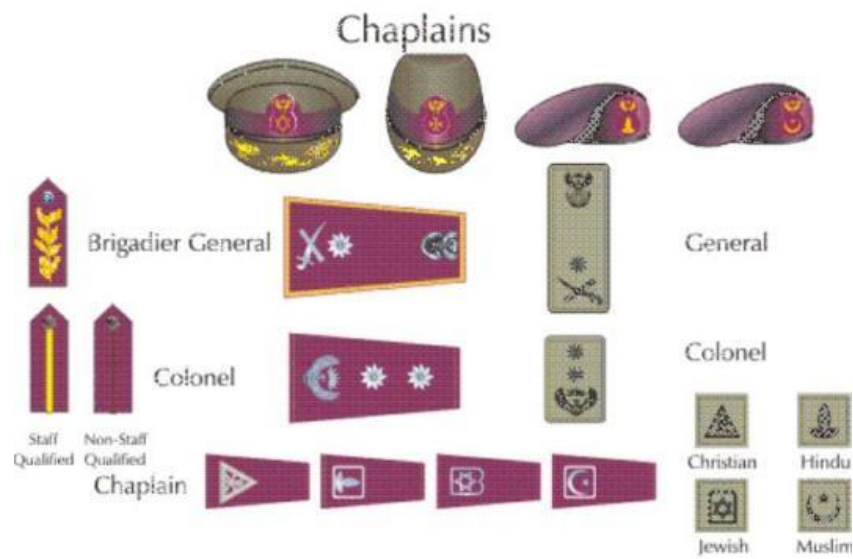
-  Okhankanyiweyo (Mentioned in Despatches)



## Rank (1952 – 1993)



## Rank (1994 – Current)

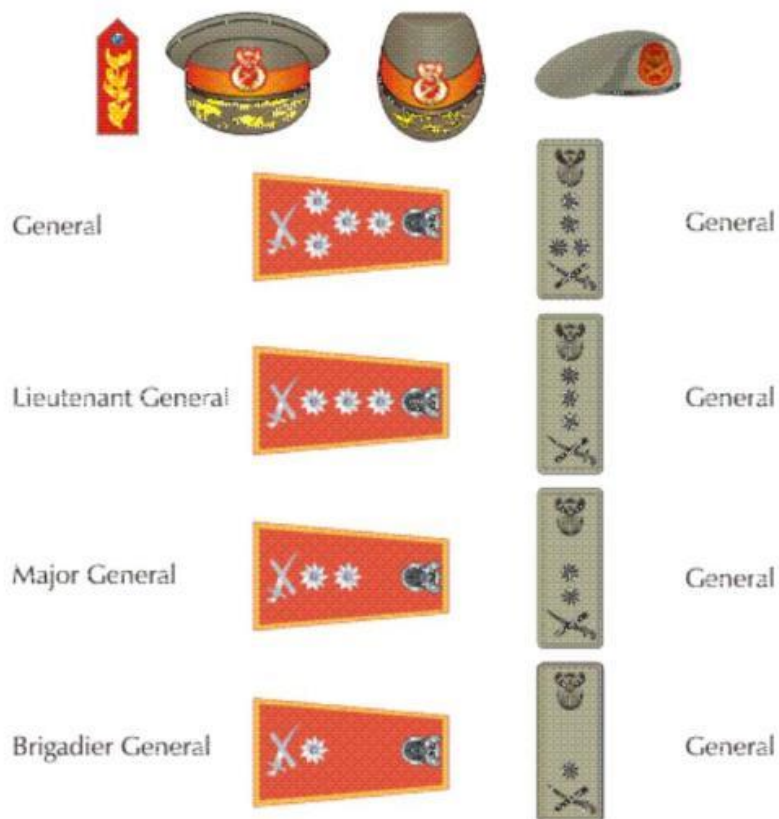


Form of address: Chaplain / Religious title, subject to the denomination / religion of the incumbent  
(For protocol, Chaplains hold Colonel Status, but not in Command and Control Line)

# South African Army

Rank Rank Insignia Form of Address

## General Officers



## Junior Officers



(Corps beret and badge)

Captain



Captain

Lieutenant



Lieutenant

Second Lieutenant



Lieutenant

Candidate Officer



CO

## Senior Officers



Staff  
Qualified



Non-Staff  
Qualified



(Non-Staff Qualified wear Corps insignia)



Colonel



Colonel



(Corps beret and badge)

Lieutenant Colonel



Colonel



(Corps beret and badge)

Major

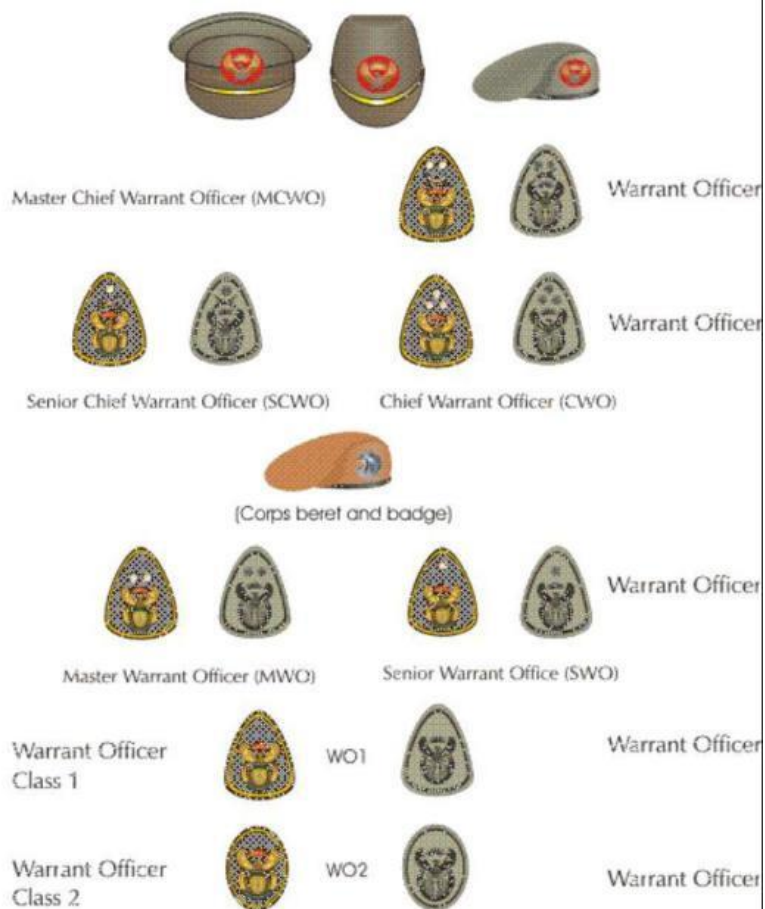


Major

## Non Commissioned Officers



## Warrant Officers





## Uniform









Resources:

<http://hwmw.net46.net/samw/index.htm>

<https://en.wikipedia.org>

<https://sa-soldier.com>

<http://www.southafricanmilitaria.com>